

CLAIMS

1. A unit (1) for transferring articles (1) from a machine (MI) for producing these articles to a packaging machine (MA), the unit including:
- a plurality of means (4a) for receiving said articles (1a), said receiving means (4a) being situated between an outlet station (3) of said producing machine (MI) and an inlet station (6) of said packaging machine (MA);
- said receiving means (4a) being arranged at a variable distance from one another and moving alternatively between a first working configuration (A), in which the receiving means (4a) are moved closer to each other, in order to be situated in the region of, and in registry with, said outlet station (3) of the producing machine (MI), so as to receive said articles (1a), and a second working configuration (B), in which the receiving means (4a) are moved far from each other, in order to be situated in the region of, and in registry with, said inlet station (6) of the packaging machine (MA), so as to transfer the articles (1a) to the inlet station (6);
- the unit being characterized in that said receiving means (4a) include a plurality of hoppers (4a) equipped with bottoms (4b), which can be opened; said hoppers (4a), being movable to said first working configuration (A), where they take positions corresponding and in registry with respective stationary hoppers (3a) placed at fixed mutual distances at said outlet station (3), and movable to said second working configuration (B), where they take positions corresponding and in registry with respective stationary hoppers (5a) placed at fixed mutual distances and belonging to an operative terminal line (5); said

terminal line (5) being situated between said receiving means and said inlet station (6) and the relevant hoppers (5a) are so located to match corresponding box-compartments (6a) of a box-conveyor (6) of said inlet station.

2. A unit according to claim 1, characterized in that said receiving means (4a) are mounted moving on guide means (30), in order to alternatively compress/expand with respect to one another, under the action of motor means.

3. A unit according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that said receiving means (4a) include a plurality of mobile hoppers (4a) with bottoms which can be opened, said mobile hoppers (4a) being capable of moving to said first working configuration (A), in which the mobile hoppers correspond and are in registry with corresponding hoppers (3a) of said outlet station (3), and moving to said second working configuration (B), in which the relevant bottoms (4b) of said mobile hoppers correspond to and are in registry with respective box-compartments (6a) of a box-conveyor (6) of said inlet station (6).

4. A unit according to claim 1, characterized in that said operative terminal line (5) is mounted on a mobile support (50) in order to be moved at the same speed as said box-conveyor (6) of said inlet station (6) of the packaging machine (MI)